REMARKS

Claims 1-32 are pending. Claims 1-32 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Claims 1 and 17 are amended. The applicant traverses the rejections and respectfully requests reconsideration in view of the remarks below.

Information Disclosure Statement

The applicant filed a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement on April 26, 2005, and requests consideration of the references cited therein by the Examiner.

Claims 1-3, 8, 10, 17-19, 24 and 26

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 8, 10, 17-19, 24 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,917,913 ("Wang") further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,233,565 ("Lewis"). Claim 1 recites a method for signing an electronic document, more particularly as set forth below.

> 1.   A method for signing an electronic document, the method comprising:
>   establishing an electronic signature appearance for an electronic signature, an electronic signature appearance comprising a visual manifestation of the electronic signature on the electronic document;
>   determining a bounding region on the electronic document for the display of the electronic signature appearance;
>   at the time of signing an electronic document, previewing the electronic signature appearance in the bounding region; and
>   signing the electronic document with an electronic signature, the electronic signature associated with the electronic signature appearance.

The Examiner asserts that Wang discloses the first two limitations of claim 1 (before current amendment). Referring to Wang's Fig. 2, Wang discloses a system whereby a transaction request is sent from a requesting device 202 to a portable electronic authorization device (PEAD) 200. A user can activate a switch 210 on the PEAD 200 if the user wishes to authorize the transaction request (Col. 4, ll. 46-47). Upon doing so, an approval message is generated and encrypted by the PEAD 200 and transmitted back to the requesting device 202 (Col. 4, ll. 47-49). For example, the requesting device 202 can be an ATM machine and the PEAD 200 implemented in a PDA (Col. 4, ll. 16-17, Col. 10, ll. 3-5). Rather than a user inputting identification data into the ATM, the user's authorization for a transaction with the

ATM is obtained as described above (Col. 4, ll. 56-65). Wang further discloses that "a transaction embodied in the transaction request from the electronic transaction system may be appended with data representative of an "electronic signature" prior to being encrypted and retransmitted back to the electronic transaction system" (Col. 7, ll. 3-7). The Examiner relies on the above passage from Wang as disclosing "establishing an electronic signature appearance for an electronic signature".

The applicant respectfully submits the Examiner has misunderstood the meaning of an "electronic signature appearance" and has amended the claim to clarify the meaning of this term without changing the scope of the claim. An electronic signature appearance is a visual manifestation of an electronic signature for an electronic document. Although Wang discloses appending data *representative of an electronic signature* to a transaction, and gives the example of appending user identification data and a time stamp (Col. 7, ll. 8-12; Fig. 3B), there is no disclosure in Wang of an electronic signature appearance. By contrast, it seems that Wang includes the data representative of an electronic signature in the response message, which is then encrypted and transmitted to the requesting device - but there is no disclosure of any visual manisfestation of said data representative of an electronic signature, and no disclosure of establishing an electronic signature appearance. That is Wang does not disclose that an electronic signature appearance, where an electronic signature appearance is a visual manifestation of an electronic signature, is established.

The Examiner asserts that Lewis discloses the third limitation of "at the time of signing an electronic document, previewing the electronic signature appearance in the bounding region", referring to Lewis at Col. 19, line 50 – Col. 20, line 10. In the excerpt referred to by the Examiner, Lewis is describing a system where a user can input mailing addresses and other information into a client computer, connect to a server, and print postage onto an envelope, label or series of envelopes and labels. A user can preview a single envelope or label, and a return address, mailing address and a bitmap of a sample indicium (*e.g.*, 2-D barcode and postage amount, see Figs. 4A and 4B) is displayed as it would appear printed (Col. 19, ll. 52-56). The user can then select to print the envelope or label, and is connected to a web server and a file of

the mailing addresses and other information is sent (Col. 19, ll. 58-63). The file is digitally
signed and the digital signature is verified by a validation server (Col. 19, ll. 58-63). The address
file is used to calculate postage amounts, the contents of the indicium are then hashed into a
message format and the resulting message is digitally signed (Col. 19, line 64 to Col. 20, line
10). The indicium is then encrypted and sent back to the user's computer for formatting and
printing. As each indicium is hashed, the appropriate postage amount is deducted from the
customer's descending register on PSD located on a master server (Col. 20, ll. 11-13).

Lewis' digital signature process is unrelated to the print preview process described,
where a user can print preview an envelope or label. There is no preview of an electronic
signature appearance, where an electronic signature appearance is a visual manifestation of an
electronic signature. What is displayed to the user in the preview is a return address, a mailing
address and a bitmap of a sample indicium (e.g., 2-D barcode and postage amount, see Figs. 4A
and 4B); there is no preview of an electronic signature appearance.

Accordingly, Wang and Lewis fail to disclose at least the first and third limitations of
claim 1 as discussed above. Claim 1 is therefore in condition for allowance. Claims 2 – 16
depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claim 17 recites a computer program product, tangibly stored on a machine-readable
medium, and including instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to perform
actions similar to the actions recited in claim 1. Accordingly, claim 17 in allowable over Wang
in view of Lewis for at least the same reasons as discussed above in reference to claim 1. Claims
18 – 32 depend from claim 17 and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

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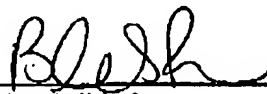Page   : 11 of 11

No fees are believed due, however, please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:_____Apr 26|05_____   _____

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